

CALIFORNIA FILM & TELEVISION TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

EXPENDITURE TRACKING TIPS and RECORD KEEPING

A. GENERAL TRACKING TIPS

1. The cost report must be in U.S. dollars. The costs recorded are to be actual costs with no markups, profit additions or personal expenses.
2. Expenses incurred whether paid or not (crew that has worked or is working, materials used or in use, services that have already been performed) prior to the issuance of the Credit Allocation Letter (CAL) are not qualified expenditures. However, qualified items which required full or partial payment (insurance premium, office rent) prior to the issuance of the CAL may be pro-rated. For example, insurance premium payment may be prorated by the number of pre-production and production weeks, with the payments for weeks after issuance of the CAL considered qualified expenditures.
3. Refunds and credit notes received for discounts, rebates, invoicing errors and purchase returns must be credited to the production costs.
4. Completion bond expenditures must reflect any "no claims rebate" received (the amount reported must be net after rebate).
5. Amortization of series costs must be allocated to specific cost categories.
6. All receipts/invoices must be legible; illegible documentation may not be accepted by the CPA.
7. Petty Cash (P.C.) receipts should be numbered, legible, and must not be truncated, with each transaction clearly marked on the front of the P.C. envelope or on a spreadsheet.
8. In-kind services and deferrals are not considered qualified expenditures. Only direct out-of-pocket costs may qualify.
9. Contingency funds which are spent during the production period should be properly allocated into the specific accounts on the cost reports.

B. SPECIFIC TRACKING TIPS & USEFUL INFORMATION

1. Allocating Wages and Materials in Package Deals

It is customary for some contracted work to package together labor, services, and materials (e.g., prosthetic manufacture, post sound packages, visual effects digital work, set or prop manufacturing). Invoices should indicate what costs of the package are attributable to labor and what costs are attributable to materials or facility costs. In recognizing that it is sometimes difficult to apportion services, below please find some guidelines:

- Post-production facilities which bundle services should break out all labor charges for any sound editorial work.
- Facility stage costs such as ADR recording, Foley recording, and Dubbing stage, digital intermediate creation, and similar services which combine labor and facility/materials may be attributed as non-wage expenses if it is not feasible to separate wages from services/materials.
- Visual Effects companies may use the ratio of 65% labor, 35% materials for all invoices for reporting purposes to the California Film Commission.

2. Verification of In-state Work

Each production must obtain documentation from visual effects, digital effects, post sound and/or title design companies or contractors in order to verify that visual effects, digital effects, post sound and/or title design work was performed in the state. Documentation may be a letter or invoice from the supplier stating that the labor and materials invoiced are attributable to work performed in the state. If a portion of the work was performed out of state by the company or its subcontractors, the statement or invoice must indicate the dollar amount for such work and/or materials. This documentation will be subject to review by the CPA performing the Agreed Upon Procedures.

3. Producer (Hyphenate) Wage Split

If an employee is receiving any kind of Producer credit (see definition in CFC Guidelines) on the project along with a below the line credit, the wages attributable to the below the line account will qualify up to \$100,000 (if DGA UPM) or up to the industry standard rate for non-union. In the case of a UPM, if s/he will not be receiving a UPM credit on the project, then none of the UPM salary will qualify. Other examples:

- If a Visual Effects Supervisor also receives a Visual Effects Producer screen credit, the wage attributable to the VFX Supervisor account will qualify up to \$100,000.
- If a Post Supervisor receives an Associate Producer screen credit, the wages attributable to the Post Supervisor account will qualify up to the industry standard rate.
- If a First Assistant Director receives a Co-Producer screen credit as well as a 1st AD credit, the wages attributable to the First Assistant Director account will qualify up to \$100,000 (DGA) or industry standard rate if non-union.
- All wages attributable to any individual that receives an on screen producer credit are subject to review.

4. Proof of Usage in State (filming in and out of CA)

The use of goods - purchased or rented out of state but used in the state - qualify for the tax credit, as do goods purchased or rented in state. Items purchased in state will need to be prorated if items are also used out of state. For items purchased out of state, the production company must be able to provide proof (e.g. call sheets, production reports, etc.) of use of such items in California to the CPA performing the Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP). This includes any items purchased over the internet and used in the state (see #8 below regarding shipping goods). If proof is not available, cost may be disallowed. For productions where 100% of shooting occurs in California, all items purchased or leased for direct use in the production shall be assumed to be used in-state.

5. Proration For Out of State Work, Goods, and Services (filming in and out of CA)

If at any time during the production period the project operates out of state, wages, goods and services must be prorated proportionately to accurately allocate the costs. For example, if an employee who makes \$1000/week works 2 days out of the state and 3 days in the state, his or her salary would be prorated and \$600 (\$200/daily rate x 3 days) would be the employee's qualified wages for that week. If a company is contracted to perform work both inside and outside of the state, their contract amount would need to be prorated proportionately for the percentage of work time expended in and out of California. Corroborating evidence regarding services rendered, amounts owed and paid during a given project phase includes, but is not limited to: (1) fully executed contracts; (2) other written agreements; (3) payroll report and (4) cancelled checks. Rented or purchased items such as camera equipment, self-drive cars, production trucks, picture cars, wardrobe, props and the like must all be prorated if they are used out of state. Insurance premiums must also be prorated if filming occurs out of the state.

6. Proration for Stunt Coordinator or Stunt Riggers/Performers

Stunt Coordinator, stunt riggers or safeties earnings are considered qualified wages when not on camera. The production company must indicate on production reports and Exhibit "G's" those days when a stunt coordinator or stunt person is "not photographed" or performs on camera and tag wages accordingly.

7. Travel Expenses

Airfare is considered a qualified expenditure if air travel originates and concludes in California (intrastate only). Travel day salaries for qualified individuals traveling within the state are qualified expenditures. Travel day salaries for qualified individuals traveling into or out of the state do not qualify. Travel Agency fees qualify when airfare is purchased from a California travel agent for intrastate travel. Luggage fees qualify for intrastate travel only.

Travel allowances to unqualified cast or crew are not considered qualified expenditures; however, if the production company directly pays for a hotel room or corporate housing (no private housing rentals) or intrastate airfare, those expenditures will qualify. Proof of intrastate travel (itemized) will also be required for any travel allowances provided.

Aerial photography is qualified provided the helicopter or plane takes off and lands in California.

Per Diems for non-qualified individuals do not qualify. For producer-hyphenates, per diem is considered a qualified expenditure up to the amount commensurate with per diems given to other department heads.

8. Shipping Goods

The costs to ship items into or out of the state are not qualified expenditures. The costs to ship items intrastate do qualify; however, in both instances, please break out the cost of the item from the shipping costs, so as to properly code these expenses.

9. Insurance Claims Refunds, & Budget Thresholds

Insurance deductibles are not qualified expenditures. Refunds received as the result of an insurance claim may be included as a qualified expenditure if spent on qualified labor or materials. Any additional costs associated with an insurance claim will not be counted toward the budget threshold criteria (e.g., if an insurance claim causes the production to exceed the \$10 mil or \$75 million thresholds, the production will not be disqualified or reclassified).

10. Litigation Costs & Budget Thresholds

Any costs associated with litigation including legal fees and settlement costs will not be considered Qualified Expenditures. Any litigation costs that may cause the production to exceed its budget threshold will not be a cause for reclassification or disqualification. Standard production legal expenses other than for litigation purposes are considered qualified spend (excludes legal expenses for distribution, marketing, or financing).

11. Related Party Transactions

All related party* transactions must be in accordance with an arm's length standard. In determining the true expense of a related party, the standard to be applied in every case is that of a person dealing at arm's length with an unrelated person. A related party transaction meets an arm's length standard if the results of the transaction are consistent with the results that would have been realized if related parties had engaged in the same transaction under the same circumstances with an unrelated party (arm's length result). Whether a transaction produces an arm's length result generally will be determined by reference to the results of comparable transactions under comparable circumstances. The production company should provide the CPA performing the Agreed Upon Procedures with a breakdown of any related party transactions, as they are subject to review. Comparison bids and/or studio rate cards may be requested. If the production company rents equipment from a crew member, this is not a related party transaction.

*The term “related parties” is understood to mean the reporting entity; its affiliates; principal owners, management, and members of their immediate families, entities for which investments are accounted for by the equity method; and any other party with which the reporting entity may deal when one party has the ability to significantly influence the management or operating policies of the other, to the extent that one of the transacting parties might be prevented from fully pursuing its own separate interest. Related parties also exist when another entity has the ability to significantly influence the management or operating policies of the transacting parties or when another entity has an ownership interest in one of the transacting parties and the ability to significantly influence the other, to the extent that one or more of the transacting parties might be prevented from fully pursuing its own separate interests.

12. Cut off Date For Tracking Costs

Costs are qualified only until 30 days after the creation of the final elements. Only expenditures incurred up to 30 days after that date shall be considered qualified expenditures (pre-paid items for services that have not yet been performed do not qualify). Documentation which indicates the date of completion of the final elements e.g., digital air master, composite answer print, or digital cinema files, will be required by the CPA performing the Agreed Upon Procedures. This documentation should be a facility invoice evidencing the date the final elements were completed.

13. Production Assets

Proceeds from the sale of props and other production assets must be deducted from the cost presented in the cost report.

- a) Any assets with a purchase price over \$10,000 will be subject to review in determining tangible personal property value. As a general rule, the lesser of the net cost of the asset after sales proceeds (if assets sold) or 50% of the purchase price will be allowed as a qualified expenditure. If the asset is destroyed during the process of production, applicant should maintain documentation as proof for verification by the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) performing the Agreed Upon Procedures for the company.
- b) Any leased or rented items manufactured, assembled, or fabricated to specification with a value over \$10,000 shall be treated as a capital lease if it meets any one of the following four conditions: 1. If the term of the lease exceeds 75% of the life of the asset; 2. If there is a transfer of ownership to the lessee at the end of the lease term; 3. If there is an option to purchase the asset for substantially less than the fair market value (“bargain price”) at the end of the lease term; 4. If the present value of the lease payments, discounted at an appropriate discount rate, exceeds 90% of the fair market value of the asset. Any such rental or lease agreement that meets the standards for a capital lease will be considered a purchase and subject to a 50% expense cap for purposes of qualifying for the tax incentive.
- c) Office, post production or effects equipment such as computers, hardware and relevant components, copiers, and printers which are purchased for the production will be allowed the lesser of the net cost of

the asset after sales proceeds (if assets sold) or 20% of their purchase price as a qualified expenditure.

Here are some examples of the above:

1. If an Asset over \$10k is Sold (e.g. 50% assets):
If the asset is sold, the qualified costs is the lesser of the net cost after sales proceeds or 50% of the original purchase price. So in one example, if a \$15,000 asset is sold for \$6,000 (net cost of \$9,000), the qualified cost is \$7,500 (50% of the original purchase). In a second example, if a \$15,000 asset is sold for \$11,000 (net cost of \$4,000), the qualified cost is \$4,000. So in summary, if the asset is sold the most you could get as a qualified cost would be 50% of the original purchase price.
2. If an Asset over \$10k is Retained (e.g. 50% assets):
If the asset is retained, the qualified cost is limited to 50% of the original purchase price in all cases.
3. If an Asset over \$10k is Destroyed (e.g. 50% assets):
If the asset is destroyed as part of the production, the qualified cost is the full value of the asset. However, in all cases the production company must maintain documentation that the asset was destroyed (e.g. photographs, production reports, video footage, etc.).
4. Asset under \$10k (not including the post, office and effects equip):
If the asset purchase price is below \$10k, the qualified cost is the full value of the asset. The production company does not need to specifically track the asset but will need to provide a listing of all assets to the auditor and CFC.
5. If an Asset is a Post, Office and Effects Equipment Purchase:
If the asset is post, office or effects equipment, the qualified cost is limited to 20% of the original purchase price. The production company must track these types of purchases regardless of amount (for amounts below and above \$10k).

14. Expenditure Summary Report

When applying for the Tax Credit Certificate, production companies will be asked to fill out this report, which requests information such as:

- Number of man/days (the sum of the number of days (full or partial) a person worked. For example, Jane works 35 days; Jim works 26 days so total Man/days would be 61; Need this figure for all cast/crew/labor and extras & stand-ins;
- Total number of residents and non-residents hired;
- Total qualified wages & fringes and non-wages (excluding post-production);
- Total qualified wages & fringes and non-wages (post-production only)
- Total State Income taxes paid (qualified and non-qualified wages);

- Total Expenditures on Taxable Goods and non-wage Services incurred or used in the state (the total amount of purchases and rentals including the California sales and use taxes for which the production has been charged).

Accountants will need to create free fields or “tag” accordingly when inputting the information for cost reporting purposes, so the information required for this report can be tracked. When inputting employee data, the payroll service can tag and track some of this information, so it is important for the accountant to discuss this with the paymaster early in the process. (See “Tagging Expenditures” pg.7)

15. Fiscal Year End Expenditure Report

This report asks for information similar to that asked on the Expenditure Summary Report, and is required for productions which span 2 fiscal years. The California fiscal year is from July 1st to June 30th of the following year. This report is due on August 1st of the new fiscal year.

16. Employment Diversity Report

This report asks for information on the diversity of the cast and crew. Employees generally have the option of providing this information on their start paperwork. If the information is provided, ask your payroll service to include this information with the employee's information, so as to be able to provide a report to the production company at the end of the production period. If the payroll service does not ask for this information, please include an ethnicity question, at the employee's option to answer, on the deal memo or a separate form. It is important to explain to the employee that this question is being asked because your production is participating in the California Film & Tax Credit Program, and it is a requirement of the program, although answering the question is optional. The data from this report will enable the production to complete the Employment Diversity Report.

17. Box Rentals/Car Allowances

Box Rentals and Car Allowances are considered qualified expenditures for qualified individuals. Box Rentals and Car Allowances for producer-hyphenates are considered qualified expenditures.

18. Tagging Expenditures

The tagging methodology below will enable each production accountant to track qualified wages and expenditures, as well as provide the information required on both the Fiscal Year End Summary Report and the Expenditure Summary Report:

QT = Qualified Taxable Expenditures (Qualified Non-Wage Spend Subject to Sales/Use Tax)

NT = Nonqualified Taxable Expenditures (Nonqualified Non-Wage Spend Subject to Sales/Use Tax)

Sum of QT + NT = **Total Expenditures on Taxable Goods and Services**

QN = Qualified Nontaxable Expenditures (Qualified Non-Wage Spend NOT Subject to Sales/Use Tax)

Sum of QN + QT = **Total Qualified (non-wage) Spend** (to be allocated between Production & Post)

QW = **Qualified Wages and Fringes** (to be allocated between Production & Post)

NQ = Nonqualified Wages and Fringes & Nonqualified Nontaxable Expenditures

LO = **Qualified Loan Outs and Fringes** (As Loan Out fringes don't qualify (except for Vacation, Holiday, and payroll service fees from a California-based payroll service), Loan Outs may require a different free field from "QW" so that they can have a different "default" of fringe free field coding – check with your payroll service.)

To break out post production amounts, run reports from the accounting system and isolate line items in the post production range of accounts. Once you have only the post production accounts:

1. Sort by free field code **QW** to get **Qualified Wages & Fringes – Post Production Only**.
2. Sort by free field **QN** and total all QNs.
3. Sort by **QT** and total all QTs.
4. Add the total **QT** amount to the total **QN** amount to get **Qualified Non-Wage Spend – Post Production Only**.

We advise all projects to utilize this tagging method or verify that the tagging method being used will enable you to provide the required breakout of figures. Most payroll services will be able to pre-program your software with these naming conventions, as well as enable their clients to tag the qualified fringes or track the qualified fringes for you by isolating them in their fringe tables.

We understand that some projects may have a need to keep track of expenditures for other purposes, and may need to add tags or utilize their own system.

C. MATERIALS FOR VERIFICATION OF EXPENDITURES

Production companies will need to provide the CPA that will be performing the Agreed Upon Procedures report access to the following materials (including but not limited to):

- Documentation from post production facility verifying completion of final elements.
- List of all visual effects, digital effects, and/or title companies who worked on the production.
- Documentation from all visual effects, title, and/or digital effects companies indicating the total dollar amount of work performed within the state.
- Complete Inventory/Asset list (electronic);
- Listing of items with a purchase price over \$10,000 indicating the status of the assets (e.g. destroyed, sold, donated, being held for future productions, given to cast or crew, etc).
- Listing of office, post production or effects equipment purchased for the production and its disposition.
- Listing of customized leased or rented items manufactured, assembled, or fabricated to specification with payment aggregating \$10,000 or more.
- Listing of all related party transactions, including type of relationship, transactions, amount of transactions; comparison bids may be requested.
- Listing of all parties with a 5% or greater ownership in or other affiliation with the production company.
- Copy of Credit Allocation Letter
- Full set of final, signed Production Reports for principal photography and any reshoots/additional photography
- Shooting schedule
- Final crew, cast, and vendor lists – no social security numbers please
- Final production budget including all non-qualifying expenditures
- For productions close to threshold limits, CPAs will review ATL contracts for any guaranteed deferments or bonuses, which must be included in the total budget amount.
- Cost Report
- Detailed Cost Ledger, e.g., Bible
- Payroll register of all cast, crew, and staff paid
- Detailed Trial Balance
- Detailed Ledger of expenditures - digital and hard copy
- Petty cash envelope summaries (front of each petty cash envelope along with original receipts)
- Bank Statements & Reconciliations
- Information to substantiate qualified expenditures, including invoices, purchase orders, receipts, contracts, deal memos, time cards, stop/start forms, etc.